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## 3/15/10 Testimony of Peter Wolfgang, President of FIC Action, on H.B. 5489

Good morning Chairman Gaffey, Chairman Fleischmann and members of the committee. My name is Peter Wolfgang and I am the President of the Family Institute of Connecticut Action. I am here today to oppose provisions in H.B. 5489, An Act Concerning Secondary School Reform, which would make one credit of comprehensive health education mandatory for high school graduation and which would allow this requirement to be filled as early as sixth grade.

This bill is supposed to enhance the academic performance of Connecticut's high school students. But comprehensive health education—sex education—is not academic performance. Special interests have hijacked this bill by including their own sex ed agenda in it.

Consider the history behind this request for a sex-ed graduation requirement. In 2008, Planned Parenthood and other groups came before this committee seeking the passage of "Healthy Teens," a bill which would have provided one million dollars to schools to provide comprehensive sex education. In 2009, that number became half a million dollars.

But now, instead of asking you to *fund* a sex-ed *option* for our high schools, these groups are asking you to impose an *unfunded mandate* on them. This is a burden and a challenge to local control of public education. Parents and local boards of education should be the ones to decide what will or will not be required teaching on sex education. Each community is different and local boards of ed can better reflect the values of their community in this sensitive matter.

Some communities, for instance, may object to the suggestion that pregnancies and STDs are on the rise because of a lack of sex education in our already sex-saturated society. Some communities may be forced—over their own objections but because their high schools are already overburdened—to fill the sex-ed requirement in sixth grade, as this bill allows. Some may be forced to overcome a lack of certified health education teachers by hiring outside vendors or guest speakers from groups with a vested interest in passing the sex-ed graduation requirement.

I ask this committee to remove the comprehensive health education graduation requirement—and middle school transfer credit provision related to it—from this bill. This is supposed to be an academic performance bill, not a sex education bill. Please resist the special interests by returning this bill to its original purpose. Thank you.